

Newsroom: (541) 346-5511
 Suite 300, Erb Memorial Union
 P.O. Box 3159, Eugene, OR 97403
 E-mail: editor@dailyemerald.com
 Online: www.dailyemerald.com

COMMENTARY

Editor in Chief:
 Brad Schmidt
 Managing Editor:
 Jan Tobias Monty
 Editorial Editor:
 Travis Willse

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EDITORIAL

Kay's Iraq war allegations are disturbing, need probing

The recent revelations by top weapons inspector David Kay that the United States used faulty intelligence to justify the war in Iraq does a grave injustice to the spirit of our democracy. And in the aftermath, even the most staunch governmental supporter can't deny that the whole debacle seems a bit fishy.

After Sept. 11, America became deeply concerned — and rightfully so — with its safety, and American citizens rallied in overwhelming numbers to support President Bush's efforts to battle terrorists in Afghanistan. In short, every American who supported that conflict put their trust and arguably their well-being in the hands of the federal government.

But that trust was grossly mishandled with the war in Iraq. After seemingly abandoning hopes of capturing Osama bin Laden, the accused mastermind of Sept. 11, Bush moved his crosshairs to Iraq, citing its alleged stockpile of weapons of mass destruction (or, now, weapons of mass destruction-related programs) and, subsequently, Iraq's violation of several United Nations resolutions. At the time, one could not deny that Hussein was an ostensibly oppressive dictator who, under American laws, would be labeled a mass murderer. In theory, Bush could have used that argument to justify the war, but chances are Americans would not have accepted it, given the opinion of many that we are not the world's policeman.

So Bush chose not to frame his argument for war in that manner, focusing instead on the impending doom or weapons of mass destruction and America's need to preempt a potential attack. But no evidence was found that suggested Hussein was planning any such attack, and even the intelligence that suggested he still possessed weapons at the time of the war turned out to be faulty. In fact, even any evidence that Hussein was involved with Sept. 11, which is why we began hunting terrorists in the first place, was lacking.

Some political pundits dismiss any criticism of Bush's handling of intelligence and the war as unpatriotic conspiracy theory. Perhaps they should stop and look at the situation from a different angle. Consider the possibility: America, a nation largely dependent on oil for its livelihood, uses faulty intelligence to invade and depose the government of an oil-rich nation. America then plays large part in instituting a new, America-friendly government while a major American oil company takes over oil production in the country.

After all, if weapons of mass destruction-related programs are such a huge impending concern for us, why haven't we invaded other countries with similar programs in the works?

Sure, it's possible that the government's actions were completely pure in spirit, and America did a good deed for the world by ridding it of a destructive leader (though he has yet to stand trial for his crimes). But from what we know, it's also conceivable, especially given that the intelligence was wrong, that the government exploited Sept. 11-induced support to sell a war to the American people. And that possibility, however far-fetched, should be investigated thoroughly and should include all officials involved with the war in order to restore credibility and faith in one of the most free democracies in the world.

EDITORIAL POLICY

This editorial represents the opinion of the Emerald editorial board. Responses can be sent to letters@dailyemerald.com. Letters to the editor and guest commentaries are encouraged. Letters are limited to 250 words and guest commentaries to 550 words. Authors are limited to one submission per calendar month. Submission must include phone number and address for verification. The Emerald reserves the right to edit for space, grammar and style.



Steve Baggs Illustration

Robbing from the poor

On Monday, President Bush released his projected budget for 2005, and ever since I have spent every spare second of my free time pouring over all 3,000 pages of ...

Okay, I'll be straight with you. I haven't read one page of Bush's budget. I didn't know he had released the damn thing until I read it in the newspaper today. Look, the Emerald is giving me 10 bucks and a good-job-old-chum pat on the butt per column. What do you want from me? Investigative journalism?

Furthermore — and I'd like to stress this point — I am not an economist. I am not good with numbers and really don't understand budgets. I can't even balance my checkbook. I am probably the last person on this campus who should be commenting on Bush's \$2.4 trillion proposal.

That being said, I am absolutely outraged by this budget. Outraged! I mean, I knew Bush was "starving the beast," but who could have guessed he would be so obvious about it?

"Starving the beast" refers to a counterintuitive strategy whereby tax cuts and over-the-top spending are used to starve the government of money and force cuts to public spending. It is spending for the sake of cuts.

Ronald Reagan's budget director David Stockman coined the phrase, or so it said when I Googled him. Again, what do you want from me? Actual research? Why don't you read a real newspaper, you cheap bastard?

Sorry. I didn't mean to snap. It's just that this budget has got me hopping mad! Bush's spending priorities are so fiscally irresponsible that even some Republicans are starting to bristle.

Sure, it took projected deficits of \$521



David Jagermath
 Critical mass

billion — much of which is going to a useless war in Iraq that is threatening to suck another \$50 billion of taxpayer money not included in the budget — before these conservatives raised their heads out of the sand. But better late than never I guess. Bristle away!

I have an idea: Let's just scrap that new Medicare package that was recently enacted, which is going to cost one-third more than originally estimated. Then we would have a surplus of \$13 billion. Or, if you are partial to health, let's junk that whole Social Security thing. That would have us \$29 billion in the black.

My point: Cuts alone are not enough. We need a progressive tax structure in this country that would dramatically lower the burden on the middle class while forcing the rich and their multinational corporations to pay a fair share.

Bush, by contrast, wants to use the deficits that he created through unnecessary spending as an excuse to cut an array of useful social programs. Here are a few examples:

- The Small Business Administration takes the largest percentage cut in Bush's plan: Over 83.4 percent according to the Associated Press. I guess Bush's tax cuts for the rich have trickled down to small businesses by now, making the SBA

irrelevant. Good news: Bush's budget includes \$1.1 trillion more in tax cuts for the rich over the next 10 years. I guess it's the third tax cut for the rich that creates new jobs. Or is it the fourth? I hope jobs come soon because after this column I think I'm going to need one.

- The Justice Department would take cuts of 12.7 percent in Bush's budget, which makes sense if you think about it: Since Ashcroft took over there's been very little justice going on in this country. (Sometimes they write themselves.)

- Bush's 5-percent increase in overall spending for education, which is being labeled as progress, carries the nasty sting of 38 eliminated programs in the arts and counseling departments.

- Bush's war on drugs also takes a hit in his budget. They will still be going after those potheads in full force. However, this budget eliminates a program used to locate methamphetamine labs. Luckily, Bush's cocaine-induced dream of sending a man to Mars was spared the ax and fully funded.

Bush seems intent on starving the best of government by giving our tax dollars to his pals in high places. Now, if his friends were good people doing good things, that wouldn't be a problem.

Unfortunately, Bush's friends are in defense and oil. That means that while he is gleefully starving social programs, we can all look forward to endless war, which, like the war in Iraq, will serve no other purpose than to enrich those who make their living by building the tools of humanity's destruction.

Contact the columnist at davidjagermath@dailyemerald.com. His opinions do not necessarily represent those of the Emerald.

SCHMIDT

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 and assess grammar and style.

In this instance, the same precautions were taken but to no avail. A lack of proper terminology on behalf of the Emerald created confusion, and some facts were simply wrong. At

best, the reader was confused by the article. At worst, the reader was misinformed.

It is the job of the media to educate readers with relevant and correct information. A newspaper without accuracy is without value. Likewise, a newspaper that refuses to acknowledge its mistakes is without credibility.

We at the Emerald strive for accuracy and credibility. We very much want to be

considered a worthwhile addition to this campus. And we want you to be able to trust and rely on us.

On behalf of the Emerald, I apologize to you, the reader. Every effort is being taken to ensure such mistakes do not happen again.

Contact the editor in chief at editor@dailyemerald.com.